12: Hill Y-5 (ca. 1940) 1942 NU28 Papago NU28

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NOTES ON PAPAGO POTTERY MANUFACTURE AT SANTA ROSA, ARIZONA

101 The Papagos occupy an extensive stretch of territory in the southern and southwestern portions of the state, south of the Pima. San Xavier, a small reservation, is situated near the city of Tucson; to the southwest lies the Sells area where the majority of the people live. Papago rancherias extend for a considerable distance into Sonora,
[114] Mexico. Santa Rosa, where this study of the potter's craft was made in 1935, is the largest and most important village on the several reservations.

323 Pottery making, next to agriculture and stock raising, is probably the greatest industry among the Papagos. Technique as observed at the village of Santa Rosa is quite similar to that recorded by Russell[1] for the Pima, differing from it only in minor details.

317 Clay for the manufacture of pottery is of two types—a rather coarse red material
323 containing a large amount of hematite, and a finer-grained white clay. Both kinds are obtained from beds near Covered Wells, thirteen miles west of Santa Rosa. The material is first dried thoroughly by spreading it in the sun. As the red clay is mixed with small pebbles and fragments of broken rock, winnowing is necessary before it can be used. In former times, this was accomplished by tossing the material in a basket, but at present, it is sifted through a piece of screen.

323 Tools consist of containers for the clay and water, a curved wooden paddle, a large piece of cloth (later twisted to form a support for the vessels), an anvil (a small round stone), and several smoothing and polishing pebbles. In previous times, containers were baskets and pottery vessels; now these have been supplanted largely by burlap sacks for the clay and lard pails to hold the water.

The clay is first mixed with a little sand, then dried manure is added for a temper. Sufficient water is used to moisten the material thoroughly, and the whole mass is kneaded. The bottom of another vessel serves as a form. Ashes are smoothed over its surface to prevent the moist material from sticking. Taking a lump of clay about the size of her two fists, the potter pats and works it between the palms of her hands until it is formed into a flat disk. This is dusted with ashes, fitted over the form, and molded into shape with a smoothing stone, the material meanwhile being turned around and around with the hand. It is next removed, the form again dusted with ashes, and the clay replaced, then patted flat and even with the curved paddle. The hands are dipped into water and the surface smoothed all over. The bottoms of smaller pieces are shaped by hand, without the use of a form.

The base of the vessel now completed, the potter removes it from the form and sets it right side up to dry for a time in the sun. Another piece is usually worked upon while the first is drying, in order that there may be no delay. The paddle, anvil, and smoothing stones are dropped into the water container to soak for a few moments. When ready to start building up the sides of the vessel, the potter moistens its upper edge, then twists and coils a piece of cloth into a base on which to rest her work.

In beginning the process of coiling, a lump of clay about the size of that used for the base of the vessel is divided in half, each portion being moistened and kneaded thor-

[1] Frank Russell, *The Pima Indians* (Bureau of American Ethnology. Twenty-sixth Annual Report, 1904–05. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1908).

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323 oughly. Taking a piece of the damp clay between the palms of her hands, the worker deftly rolls it into a coil just long enough to reach halfway around the top of the vessel. This is pinched into place with the wet hand. A similar coil completes the circuit. The anvil is now held in the left hand and supports the interior wall of the vessel, while the paddle rapidly strikes the exterior and smooths the coil into place. The upper edge is pinched off with the wet fingers until it is of an even height all the way around. After the addition of each completed coil, the piece is set aside to dry until it retains its shape.

When a sufficient number of coils has been added, the walls are sloped up with the handle of the paddle and the hands. The smoothing is done with a pebble dipped frequently in water. After the vessel has dried thoroughly in the sun, it is ready to be slipped. This slip is made by pouring off most of the water used for moistening the clay, dipping the hands, tools, etc., and applying to the vessel the fine wet sediment which remains in the bottom of the container.

A somewhat heavier slip is made from a very fine-grained red clay (or possibly shale, rather than clay) which apparently contains a high percentage of hematite. This material is obtained from the mountains near by, ground up, mixed with water, and applied with a piece of rag. In general, the thinner type is employed as a wash on ollas or on cooking pots which are subjected to heat, and the finer, thicker mixture on the others. After the application of the slip and a final polishing, the vessel is ready for firing.

A shallow pit is dug and exposed to the air and sun, usually for a day, to drive out all traces of moisture. Small branches and chips of mesquite are burned to form a layer of coals and ashes. On this are arranged pieces of tin to support the vessels. The latter are placed mouth downward upon the tin and covered with pieces of the same metal. Sticks of mesquite about a foot in length are stood up on end and rested against the tin, and the whole covered with chips and small branches. The firing process takes about 20 minutes, then the ashes are knocked off, the tin removed, and the vessels lifted out with two long sticks and set aside to cool. When they first emerge from the pit, they are a rich chocolate brown, but upon cooling, soon change to dull red. Probably prior to white contact, the pottery was fired in much the same manner as that practiced by the Pima. Possibly large fragments of broken ollas or jars took the place of the tin.

323 When the vessels have cooled sufficiently to permit handling, the black decoration is
386 applied. The paint for this is made by boiling down mesquite gum and chips of the wood. When finished, it is a thin brown liquid which is applied by means of small sharp-pointed sticks. The decorated vessel is then held in the heat and slowly revolved until the paint turns black and sets. This completes the process.

323 The olla or water jar appears to be the most-used article among the present-day
415 Papago. Many were observed beneath the ramadas of the houses, sometimes suspended
[352] from the cross-beams, sometimes placed in three-forked logs set upright in the ground. The majority of those now used are of a plain, unslipped earthenware in the natural color of the clay. Apparently a thin reddish wash is sometimes applied to the exterior.
[531] Several large storage ollas of a grayish or brownish buff, decorated in a brownish red and very suggestive of ancient Hohokam ware, were observed. Smaller black cooking pots with convex bottoms are still to be found. This black color is due to a deposition of soot from the fire, rather than to the natural color of the clay. Bowls and cups are likewise used at times. The writer was also shown several human figures, chiefly male,
[532] which had been made in neighboring villages.

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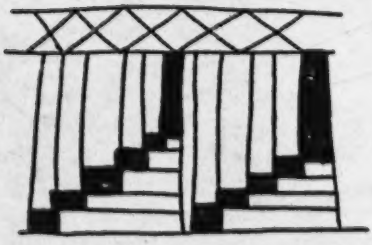
In the Arizona State Museum at Tucson are bowls of two kinds—one a shallow type with straight sides, and the other smaller, with a more rounded outline. Additional forms include straight-sided jars, a zoomorphic vessel in the shape of a duck (?),

Designs on Modern Papago pottery



Designs on old Papago pottery

and ollas somewhat larger than those observed at Santa Rosa. Some of these examples represent modern types. The widespread use of pottery among the Papago has been greatly modified since the entry of American settlers into the neighboring regions.

GERTRUDE HILL

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